ELEVEN

Community-based planning and localism in the devolved UK

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Introduction

This chapter explores how community-based planning and localism are evolving differentially in the devolved UK. Devolution in the UK has been seen as integral to the government's attempts to modernise the ways in which the public sector is organised and managed (Peel and Lloyd, 2007). However, it has been introduced in a relatively piecemeal manner, with reforms addressed to different purposes in separate parts of the UK, and with a subsequent differentiation in institutional governance arrangements (and associated executive, legislative and financial powers) that drew upon distinctive administrative practices that had previously accumulated in each territory (Pemberton and Lloyd, 2008). In this context, the chapter initially sets out a framework to understand the differing nature of community-based planning arrangements evolving in the UK. In particular, it places such changes within a broader context of the rescaling of the state and the importance of the changing institutions and geography of the state in shaping the governance and policy arrangements for community-based planning. Subsequently, a comparative analysis is undertaken of the arrangements emerging, and the implications for wider debates concerned with planning and governance are discussed.

Community-based planning and the rescaling of the state

Given that the UK model of devolution is permissive of divergence in policy design and implementation (Jeffrey, 2007), it is perhaps unsurprising that community-based planning has been socially constructed and implemented differently across the devolved UK (Gallent, 2013). Indeed, while there have been convergent paths towards community-based planning, divergent forms have subsequently emerged. For example, in terms of convergence, there have been

ongoing and long-standing concerns across the UK with securing the effective engagement and participation of local communities in planning processes or planning at the local level (Skeffington Committee, 1969; Sarkissian et al, 2010), as well as the involvement of communities in designing, developing and implementing local plans focused on reshaping the local environment (Kelly, 2009). However, divergent forms of community-based planning can be identified.

Of particular note in this respect has been the emergence of neighbourhood planning in England. The Localism Act 2011 provided the opportunity for local communities/neighbourhoods to develop neighbourhood plans, as well as to take responsibility for designing, developing and delivering local services (DCLG, 2011). Hence, community-based planning in England has increasingly focused on land use and economic development issues. This is in contrast to the situation in other parts of the UK, where a broader conception of community-based planning has held sway. This has involved community-based planning being viewed as a response to fragmented delivery and institutional arrangements for public services in local communities. In various iterations, it has been developed both as a process and a strategy for the integrated delivery of local public services by securing greater coordination across and within organisational boundaries (Pemberton and Lloyd, 2008).

Nevertheless, to begin to understand how and why different forms of community-based planning have emerged in a devolved UK, a number of different theoretical and/or conceptual approaches can be drawn upon. First, the work of Jessop (1990, 2008) has been used to highlight how devolution may be reflective of the 'hollowing out' of national state functions under a neoliberal market-led regime to other scales of governance (Goodwin et al, 2005). Nevertheless, Goodwin et al (2005) move on to argue that devolution is also an expression of the 'filling in' of the state by social and political forces – and with new structures and sub-national scales of governance emerging. This can be explored further in respect of community-based planning arrangements in the devolved UK.

Linked to discussions of filling in are the concepts of 'structural' and 'relational' filling in (Shaw and Mackinnon, 2011). Structural filling in refers to the establishment of new organisational forms of governance and engagement (eg neighbourhood planning and/or other forms of community-based planning) and the reconfiguration of those already in existence. On the other hand, relational filling in highlights how such new or reconfigured arrangements may be reflective (or not) of relations and links with institutions/organisations, communities and/

or individuals elsewhere. Again, this needs to be explored in relation to community-based planning arrangements.

Third, the work of Shaw et al (2009) is also of relevance to understanding the differential nature of community-based planning arrangements. Shaw et al (2009) argue that there has been – to varying degrees – evidence of institutional, policy and strategy isomorphism since devolution was introduced in the UK in 1998 with the creation of the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Assembly. This describes the tendency of key actors to make governance and policy arrangements increasingly similar while attempting to change them (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Such issues also warrant exploration.

These different approaches suggest that there is a lack of a coherent body of theoretical work on UK devolution. However, in response, Goodwin et al (2013) suggest that a modified strategic-relational approach (SRA) may help to bring some of the strands highlighted earlier together. Indeed, the SRA can help to examine 'the interactions between the processes of hollowing out and filling in … in each of its constituent territories' (Goodwin et al, 2013, p 161).

Consequently, a key objective of this chapter is to illustrate the value of adopting and applying the SRA – including related approaches outlined earlier – to community-based planning. The SRA helps to draw our attention to how the changing institutions and geography of the state can influence the nature of political strategies and how these may subsequently influence the new forms, structures and scales emerging for community-based planning arrangements. However, equally, it also draws our attention to the dialectical relationship that exists in respect of how local political strategies can themselves inform the changing institutions and geography of the state (Pemberton and Goodwin, 2010). What this means is that it becomes possible to locate new forms and scales of community-based planning – for example, the shift to promoting neighbourhood planning and new forms of localism in England – within wider sets of social and political forces that may mediate or influence the reconfiguration of state power.

The SRA has been identified as 'perhaps the most theoretically sophisticated discussion of the state currently available' (Kelly, 1999, p 109). There are three key points in relation to the modified SRA. First, the state needs to be viewed in relational terms: the power of the state is the power of the social and political forces acting in and through the state, such as state managers and other interests at a variety of scales (Jessop, 1990, pp 269–70). However, the state is more permeable to certain social and political forces (and operating at different scales) than

others. The forces that can gain access to new institutions associated with the governance of community-based planning will vary depending on the scale and nature of such arrangements.

Second, a relational view of the state does not guarantee that it will deliver a particular set of activities. Rather, its coherence is created through particular (hegemonic) projects and activities. These may be promoted by different actors and interests. They are then able to implement a series of political strategies at the local level. Consequently, as structures for governing community-based planning change, so, too, will the dominant social and political forces and the political strategies that are pursued. Those who are able to act 'in and through' the state will seek to develop a range of political strategies that are then used by civil servants and politicians to 'harness state institutions towards particular socio-economic projects' (Brenner, 2004, p 87).

Third, the state may be 'strategically' and 'spatially' selective: certain types of political strategy are favoured by the state over others. As a result, particularly powerful (hegemonic) groups may exert more power than others and the state may therefore privilege their strategies, interests, coalitions, spatial scales of action and time horizons over others (Jessop, 1997).

The framework can therefore be utilised to explore the changing structures and practices of community-based planning. However, in order to understand some of the influences of relevance, there is first a need to consider how the very nature of community-based planning in the devolved UK may have both a spatial and temporal dimension.

Temporal, structural and spatial variations in community-based planning arrangements in the devolved UK

With regards to processes of the hollowing out and filling in of the state, and associated processes of structural and relational filling in for community-based planning arrangements, what we see in a devolved UK are both temporal, structural and spatial variations emerging both within and between each of the devolved territories. This is despite an initial common interest in developing community-based planning within each area of the UK: (1) to address an increasingly 'congested state' (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002); (2) to secure the integration of activity, responsibility and expenditure across different scales of working (Morphet, 2004); (3) to align the disparate cultures, aims, responsibilities, management systems and planning frameworks of organisations towards shared and negotiated public goals and to secure financial savings (Richards, 1999 **[[citation not referenced, but see**

et al. Please add/correct]]); and (4) to promote greater democratic engagement in local communities (Stoker, 2003).

In England and Wales, the Local Government Act 2000 placed a duty on local authorities to produce community strategies as part of an agenda for the modernisation of public services and a new role of community leadership for local government. In England, local strategic partnerships (LSPs) – non-statutory bodies bringing together public, voluntary, community and private sector organisations to coordinate the contribution that each can make to improve localities – were initially responsible for community-based planning (DCLG, 2007a). Similar arrangements developed in Wales through community strategy partnerships (CSPs) to support the pooling of budgets, policy integration, joint collaboration and consultation (Williams et al, 2006).

However, it was not until 2003 that similar powers were introduced in Scotland, with the Local Government (Scotland) Act (Carley, 2006). In Scotland, there was a historical continuity to such forms of intervention and policy management (Lloyd, 1997). As a result, community-based planning gradually emerged and both drew upon and reflected distinctive features of established Scottish public administrative practice, including an emphasis on partnership working (Illsley and Lloyd, 2001). Nevertheless, while broadly similar arrangements have continued to evolve and mutate in Scotland and Wales, in England, the focus has changed markedly over time from an initial focus on strategy development to one now concerned with active community engagement at the neighbourhood level.

Northern Ireland has lagged further behind as a consequence of devolution being linked to the peace process and the suspension of the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly on a number of occasions. Thus, it is only with the implementation of the Review of Public Administration (RPA) in 2015 that community planning has become a statutory function for local government (Pemberton et al, 2015).

Second, in relation to structural and spatial variation, a degree of relational filling in can be witnessed in respect of community-based planning. Initially, there was a degree of 'tracking' of English governance and policy structures for community-based planning in Wales (Laffin, 2007 **[[citation not referenced. Please add/correct]]**), but in Scotland, although 32 community planning partnerships (CPPs) were set up and had equivalent functions to LSPs in England and CSPs in Wales, there was much more of an emphasis on locating community planning within broader regeneration agendas (Scottish Executive, 2006 **[[citation not referenced. Please add/correct]]**). This took place at a later date in England and Wales. Indeed, in England, the 2004 Egan

Review highlighted that community strategies needed to become more strategic and take a greater cross-disciplinary and integrated approach to social, economic and environmental issues. Consequently, they were reshaped through 2005 and beyond into 'sustainable community strategies' (SCSs) (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2007).

In addition, it was recognised in England that, in similarity to Scotland's emphasis on aligning local and national priorities for action through specified single outcome agreements (SOAs), there needed to be a delivery plan for the SCS for it to be meaningful. Hence, local area agreements (LAAs) were established in England that set out priority outcomes for a local area as agreed between central government and a local area represented by a local authority and LSP, and through linking the SCS to the LAA (DCLG, 2007b). Such changes in community-based planning were also reflected in Wales, with local service boards (LSBs) replacing CSPs in 2009 in order to develop local service agreements (LSAs) to link community and area priorities and to effectively integrate and deliver services that were responsive to citizens' needs (Welsh Assembly Government, 2007).

With regards to Northern Ireland, traditional processes of community-based planning generally took the form of 'development plans', which guided development decisions in a local area. These were managed centrally (Northern Ireland Planning Service, 2008). However, following the RPA, there is now a statutory obligation for a variety of partners to work with local authorities through a community planning partnership (CPP) in developing and delivering the community plan. Therefore, the use of the CPP term illustrates processes of relational filling in at work both spatially and temporally, as well as both structural and strategic isomorphism in evidence; as such, models of provision have been informed by practice from elsewhere (Pemberton et al, 2015).

The arrangements for community-based planning in the devolved UK now involve a clear dichotomy (see Table 11.1). On the one hand, in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, there is a degree of consistency in respect of community-based planning – both in terms of strategy and governance. Concerns with the modernisation of the public sector and improving performance are evident, along – to varying degrees – with concerns around fairness, local responsiveness and closer engagement with communities. In Wales, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 has led to public service boards (PSBs) with responsibility for well-being plans replacing the previous LSBs (and their respective single integrated plans). This reflects ambitions to move the LSBs to a more statutory footing and to link

Table 11.1: Summary of community-based planning initiatives under UK devolution

	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Rationale	Initial emphasis on promoting the well-being of local areas to address fragmented delivery. With Localism Act 2011, there has been a shift to a concern with securing economic prosperity, housing growth and active community engagement.	Modernisation of the public sector and the promotion of citizen-centred public services.	Securing equality, fairness and social justice; community empowerment; local discretion and mediating social-democratic values.	Review of Public Administration; local government reform and decentralisation/devolution of powers to local government and local communities.
Policy and governance arrangements	Community strategies and sustainable community strategies (SCSs) and local area agreements (LAAs) (delivery plan) of non-statutory local strategic partnerships (LSPs). Localism Act removes requirement for LSPs; 2014 requirement for local authorities to prepare the SCS removed. Some work of SCS picked up by health and well-being boards and community safety partnerships. New 'rights' under Localism Act – emphasis on statutory neighbourhood development plans through neighbourhood planning partnerships/neighbourhood development forums.	Community strategies, community strategy partnerships. Later replaced by local service boards (LSBs) and single integrated plans (SIPs). Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 – new public service boards (PSBs) and well-being plans created. Planning Act 2015 Wales – 'place plans' as supplementary planning guidance (SPG) produced by town and community councils in conjunction with local authorities.	32 community planning partnerships (CPPs) –involve public agencies working together with the community to plan and deliver better services; a coordinating and rationalisation mechanism; pooling of budgets across different service providers. Single outcome agreements to manage centre–local relations and align local priorities with national priorities for public service reform. Some areas now engaging in neighbourhood community action plans to identify local priorities for CPPs.	Community planning partnerships set up following Review of Public Administration (RPA) and creation of 11 new local authorities. Local authority implementing community planning processes (in conjunction with other partners) and production of community plans that are aligned with existing community development.

Source: Pemberton et al (2015).

the local activity of PSBs and their respective partners to seven high-level goals set out in the Act, concerned with long-term sustainability, prosperity, health and so on. This closely resonates with the Scottish model. It also highlights how the extent of institutional and policy isomorphism can wax and wane over time between the different devolved administrations of the UK.

Applying the strategic-relational approach to understand the changing nature of community-based planning arrangements

Having charted and described the ways in which both governance and policy arrangements have developed for community-based planning in the devolved UK, there is a need to consider some of the key influences that have shaped such arrangements. Empirically, we can therefore apply the SRA approach to help develop a number of new insights of relevance.

Due to the way in which the UK state continues to govern England in a highly centralised way (compared to the devolution of authority elsewhere; see Pike and Tomaney, 2009), as well as the particular nature of community-based planning arrangements focused around neighbourhood planning, the application of the SRA is particularly focused on England. Nevertheless, reference is initially made to other parts of the UK in order to provide a suitable counterpoint.

The SRA's stress on political strategies and state projects draws attention to their respective importance in shaping different 'objects of governance' for community-based planning. These may be underpinned by new political strategies and state projects that emerge, and that are promoted by the dominant social and political forces operating at different scales. They will also be shaped by the specific historical and contemporary socio-political arrangements that exist.

Thus, in Northern Ireland, political and constitutional factors have combined with economic efficiency concerns to inform the development of a state project concerned with modernising public services and securing institutional and service integration (Pemberton et al, 2015). In turn, the application of the SRA framework highlights how new structures and scales of governance have been created to deliver such an agenda. For example, the RPA reduced the number of local authorities in Northern Ireland from 26 to 11 from April 2015 onwards. However, new responsibilities and functions were devolved to local government, including community planning. In this respect, there are concerns with linking community planning with statutory

land-use planning to facilitate new processes of place shaping that move beyond land use *per se*.

Such an approach has therefore led to an increase in the importance of social and political forces at the local (rather than national) level given that, historically, planning has been centralised (McNeill, 2006 **[[citation not referenced, but see et al. Please add/correct]]**). A wider set of partners (eg planners, community organisations and interest groups) are now involved in community planning processes. However, the application of the SRA highlights that as well as new objects of governance for community planning being developed around social well-being and economic development, long-standing political and religious tensions have also resulted in such objects of governance being aligned with existing processes and structures of community development and the wider peace agenda. Hence, they are focused on securing an 'edge-to-edge' approach that attempts to address the needs of all businesses and residents, rather than specific locations or groups.

Turning attention to Scotland, using the SRA framework helps to identify how the ruling Scottish National Party have – through various commissions – reiterated a national centre-left-focused state project around securing equality, fairness and social justice, rather than a singular focus on economic growth. Coupled to this has been the Christie Commission's (2011) work on improving the coordination and integration of public services to secure economic efficiencies. In the context of community-based planning arrangements, such rationales around local democracy and resource efficiencies have therefore informed the development of new multi-scalar arrangements for CPPs in Scotland. As such, there has been a reiteration of how CPPs need to work at a national level to agree a clear plan with the Scottish government for how local partner organisations will work together to achieve outcomes specified in an SOA. However, with the new Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, there is also a statutory requirement for all community planning partners to develop and extend arrangements at a local level to facilitate public participation in shaping priorities, as well as in the design and delivery of services to improve local outcomes.

Hence, the SRA's emphasis on exploring the dominant forces operating at different scales highlights how new objects of governance for CPPs are being shaped both nationally and locally, with a particular focus on the pooling of budgets to secure financial savings as well as concerns with addressing local needs and priorities more flexibly. In this respect, it is important to note how the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act has also introduced other new community 'rights'

of relevance to community-based planning, such as extending the 'community right to buy' to the whole of Scotland, rather than just in areas with a population of 10,000 or less. Nevertheless, while this change is aimed at making it easier for a wider range of local social and political actors to register an interest and exercise the right to buy land or property from (traditionally powerful) landowners, concerns remain over whether this will result in new forms of community empowerment and the extent to which community-based planning arrangements are broadly reflective of all local actors and interests.

In Wales, a national state project concerned with securing integration and resource efficiencies has informed the basis of public sector reform, with the SRA framework drawing attention to the importance of new structures and scales of working for community-based planning to deliver such ambitions. For example, the Williams Commission's (2014 **[[citation not referenced. Please add/correct]]**) *Review of public services in Wales* has led to proposals to reduce the numbers of local authorities by at least 50% in an attempt to create economies of scale and financial savings. Alongside the proposed restructuring and rescaling of local government, new community-based planning arrangements have emerged in the form of PSBs.

Indeed, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out seven overarching national goals that the new PSBs have to address locally. However, this leads to questions as to which actors will be more or less dominant or privileged in respect of the new arrangements, including the wider involvement of local communities and other local actors. For example, the role of planners and planning itself is unclear and this may compound the extent to which a 'bottom-up' approach is adopted involving local groups and those most marginalised. This is important given that the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 removed proposals for statutory 'place plans' at a local level. Arguably, such place plans would have strengthened the links between physical land-use planning and the more strategic approach of the PSB focused on integrated service delivery at the community level. Consequently, objects of governance for community-based planning in Wales are increasingly reflective of technocratic national concerns around efficient local service delivery rather than democratic engagement.

However, it is in England that the SRA most obviously highlights how new objects of governance for community-based planning have emerged, underpinned by new national political strategies and state projects. With the Localism Act 2011, there has been a move away from earlier community-based planning approaches synonymous with institutional and service integration, as expressed through SCSs.

New concerns with securing economic and housing growth have predominated, and these have also been informed by the new structures, strategies and scales of working that have emerged. The regional apparatus has disappeared – for example, there has been the abolition of regional development agencies (RDAs) and regional assemblies (RAs) – and at a sub-regional level, new local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) – with a primary economic function – have emerged.

With regards to the evolving nature of community-based planning arrangements at a local level, the SRA draws attention to how the election of a new national Coalition government in 2010 led to a new hegemonic project focused around re-stimulating the private sector and community-self-help. Ellis et al (2013) define this as 'pro-development localism', which involves aligning localism with economic development (Cowell, 2013). However, the emphasis on reduced state involvement has meant that the opportunity for divergence in respect of housing and economic growth across England (and, indeed, the UK) may persist and, indeed, become further uneven. Indeed, the emphasis within neighbourhood plans of allocating more – not less – land for housing development in overall terms suggests the strategic privileging of private sector interests over and above other actors.

Relating to this latter point, the SRA can also be used to explore the ways in which the actions of new structures and political actors that emerge in the context of community-based planning may lead to the development of new governance arrangements that have a different territorial and relational expression. In turn, associated questions arise over which actors are the dominant forces, and how such dominance is expressed. A less-heralded feature of the Localism Act was that it removed the requirement for LSPs and local authorities to prepare SCSs. Hence, those involved in neighbourhood planning arrangements are now different from those who were previously involved in broader efforts to promote the well-being of local areas, as expressed through LSPs and SCSs. More specifically, while local authorities still have a major role to play in ensuring that any neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with existing plans, the new arrangements facilitate central government's growth objectives in the context of community-based planning, as well as those of private developers.

Implications for planning and governance

Based upon the aforementioned framework, as well as previous research (see Pemberton and Lloyd, 2008, 2011; Pemberton et al, 2015), a number of further implications can be drawn out in the final section

of this chapter. Of particular interest are issues concerned with the geographies and spatiality of governance for community-based planning and associated outcomes. The path dependency and historical context for community-based planning can affect the nature and effectiveness of any new arrangements. For example, in England, there have been problems, on the one hand, in ensuring the coterminosity of new structures of neighbourhood planning with pre-existing structures and scales of working. Indeed, the history of urban regeneration activity and intervention in many UK cities (and, indeed, rural areas) has meant that there is a legacy of both active and (now) defunct programmes operating at the local level (Tallon, 2010). Similarly, in Wales, embryonic city-regional arrangements overlay the new PSBs with responsibility for community-based planning.

In addition, concerns over path dependency can also work from the 'outside in': the previous restructuring and rescaling of the state can differentially impact on the extent to which organisations or institutions are suitably placed to engage with the new community-based planning structures that are set up. In essence, existing actors may find this more or less problematic given their scales of working and territorial remit, as well as the extent to which existing networks or relationships exist with those involved in any new community-based planning arrangements that emerge.

However, on the other hand, there may also be difficulties in securing horizontal and vertical integration in governance for community-based planning where there is little evidence of any previous intervention. For example, in terms of the development of neighbourhood planning in non-parish areas of England, the chronology of boundary drawing for neighbourhood planning partnerships may be problematic. In some instances, those areas engaging in the process later have found that proposed territorial scales of working cut across or challenge the rationality of existing boundary designations. This raises interesting questions over the extent to which both a temporal and relational – as well as territorial – approach to community-based planning approaches is required. As such, a porous, dynamic and non-bounded view is required for such processes, which, at the local level, reflects the relationship between place, mobility and identity (Adey, 2010).

One further key issue concerns the nature of centre–local relations and the extent to which community-based planning arrangements are being used to 'look up' or to 'look down'. This can be referred to as 'the balcony analogy': the extent to which such processes are being driven from below (at the neighbourhood level) or from above (by central government). In England, the need to link neighbourhood

planning to other policy areas and structures is important, and especially with the dissolution of many LSP structures. The other 'rights' of neighbourhood planning – such as new models of service delivery – and their respective integration with each other may also be crucial. However, in Wales, the ways in which the PSBs engage with local neighbourhoods will also be of relevance. Consequently, there is a need to critically consider how the national and local are connected, the degree of formality and/or flexibility in such arrangements, and the implications for local discretion. Again, the value of the locally flexible – yet vertically linked – model of community-based planning in Scotland may be instructive to consider, as well as its implications for securing a more 'progressive' localism.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the complexity of community-based planning arrangements in the devolved UK. A first salient point is that the institutional structure that has emerged for such arrangements has promoted a different understanding of its role and function, as well as its intended outcomes. Through a focus on the processes of both hollowing out and filling in, it was noted that there has been a degree of structural and strategic isomorphism – operating in different directions and at different times – between each area of the devolved UK. For example, in England, while there has been an abandonment of traditional approaches to community-based planning, new structures and policies also emerged, which have an economic rationality associated with them. Moreover, filling in with respect to the emergence of new governance structures has additionally continued in other areas – for example, in Wales and Northern Ireland, while community-based planning arrangements in Scotland have also continued to evolve.

Second, from a theoretical and empirical perspective, the use of the SRA highlights how future forms of community-based planning – in terms of governance, policy and practice – can be understood in the context of the changing nature of state institutions, as well as national and local political strategy. It then becomes possible to understand how new objects of governance for community-based planning may emerge in particular places, at particular times and across varying territorial scales according to the predominant social and political forces at work.

Finally, and more broadly, a third contribution of the chapter is that it also provides a concrete example of the scale differentiation and rescaling of a particular state activity – in this instance, community-

based planning – as well as how such structures and processes have evolved over time (see Brenner, 2009). However, through a focus on issues of governance, it also highlights the difficulties in developing arrangements that are integrated, inclusive and empowering. To conclude, over 15 years on from initial devolution in the UK, the search for the most 'appropriate' forms of community-based planning continue.

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